

Spectro/MAA - for 226 remand - paraffin tests

BW 7/21/78

One of the records of the FBI's 12/7/77 HQ JFX records release should have been provided on discovery in 75-226. It is 62-109060-2845, from Section 58, R.H. Jevons to Conrad (drafted by JFGallagher) of 3/27/64.

It recounts the 3/26 meeting with Melvin Eisenberg "to discuss spectrographic examinations conducted on materials relating to the assassination of President Kennedy."

The memo is in typically vague and inconclusive FBI language, to such an extent that I believe my interpretations that follow are justified and fair.

Of the Walker bullet Gallagher stated "the lead alloy" was different than that of the "large fragment recovered from the car." He had to spell this out no more.

Most of the rest is on paraffin tests but Gallagher is evasive on "the spectrographic examinations of the bullet fragments recovered from the wound in President Kennedy's head and from the vehicle..." Of these he said no more than can be said for an appreciable percentage of all bullets ever manufactured: "were composed of the same chemical elements." The capability of the tests permitted a more definitive statement.

On the testing of the casts, all rests on assumptions not even stated, that the residues are from powder. There is no discussion of any other source, no statement that the tests established powder as the source and no reference at all to the cheek casts.

Gallagher says "it was not possible to distinguish between the powder residues of the rifle cartridges from the powder residues of the revolver cartridges." Only in a quest for evidence of guilt only is this the objective. The first objectives should have been to identify the residues as of powder and then what kind or source. This is all assumption, that Oswald fired both rifle and revolver and that the residues came from powder only.

Of the Aebersold letter, the most significant part of which I believe dealt with the rifle and shooting, Gallagher represents that Eisenberg read only what relates to the paraffin casts. Of this Gallagher states "No elements were found during these tests to distinguish between the rifle and revolver deposits" and "Nothing has come to our attention and to our knowledge nothing has been done subsequent to these examinations which would assist further in the interpretation of the data obtained..."

One question about the first quote is, I think, are the elements different in the two kinds of ammo primers? I think they are the same elements, his word.

One question about the second is the absence of any effort to duplicate the Dallas conditions. Gallagher pretends that the washing of the casts ruined them for these tests. They had even the chemical analysis of the Dallas water, etc. I believe they could have washed the test casts close enough to identical with the Dallas casts for a determination. I believe the reason this was not done is the negative paraffin results on the cheek, indicative of no rifle having been fired by LEO. (Perhaps more indicative if the presence of residues on his hands means he had not washed them.)